Quetico Provincial Park

Revised Park Policy
1982

Ministry of Natural Resources
Ontario

Release Date:
March, 1983

Ontario
Ministry of Natural Resources
Hon. Alan W. Pope
Minister
W. T. Foster
Deputy Minister

Minister's Approval Statement

Quetico Provincial Park has reigned as a jewel in Ontario's provincial parks system for most of the 20th century.

An internationally-acclaimed recreational attraction, Quetico has long been recognized for its excellent wilderness canoeing.

In 1977, a master plan for the park was approved ensuring that Quetico's unique biological and historical environment would be preserved for the future enjoyment of the people of Ontario. However, periodic reviews of any such long-range plans are crucial, since they provide an opportunity not only to evaluate progress but also to make certain the plan reflects changing needs and times.

At my request, the Provincial Parks Council, a citizens advisory committee reporting directly to me, became involved in the first five-year review of the Quetico master plan in the summer of 1981. Their efforts involved one of the most intensive public consultation programs associated with park planning and culminated with the re-affirmation of Quetico Provincial Park as a wilderness park.

I would like to commend the members of the Parks Council under the capable leadership of Chairman Fred Gray for their excellent work in considering about 1,400 public submissions and presenting a series of recommendations aimed at preserving the distinctive character and beauty of Quetico.

By re-affirming the wilderness status of Quetico, this revised master plan reflects my ministry's commitment to the protection of unique wilderness areas for future generations.

Because of the role Quetico has come to play in our lives, I have amended the parks goal in the master plan to state: "The goal is to preserve Quetico Provincial Park, which contains an environment of geological, biological, cultural and recreational significance, in perpetuity for the people of Ontario as an area of wilderness that is not adversely affected by human activities."

It is my sincere wish that Quetico inspires and enriches the lives of the people of Ontario both now and in the future.

Hon. Alan W. Pope
Minister

Contents

Minister's Approval Statement	iii		
Introduction	2		
Park Policy		Park Goal	4
		Statement Explaining the Goal	4
		Park Zoning	4
		Wilderness Zone	4
		Access Zones	4
		Research and Special Areas	5
		External Buffer Zones	5
		Park Boundary	5
		Resource Management	5
		Air	5
		Water	6
		Land	6
		Vegetation	6
		Fish	6
		Wildlife	7
		Insects and Diseases	7
		Fire	7
		User Activities	7
		Recreational Use	8
		Research	8
		Visitor Regulation Program	8
		Visitor Services	9
		Recreational Facility Development	9
		Canoe Routes	10
		Campsites	10
		Portages	10
		Trails	10
		Facilities at Access Zones	10
		French Lake Access Zone	10
		Park Management and Operation	10
		Administration	11
		Management Planning	11
		Operational Planning	11
		Plan Review	11
Figures		1 Location	1
		2 Park Zones	3

Figure 1

Location

Quetico
Provincial Park

Introduction

Quetico Provincial Park is Ontario's second largest wilderness park and one of the oldest, having been established in 1913. Located in northwestern Ontario, approximately 160 km west of Thunder Bay and adjacent to the Canada-United States boundary (Figure 1), this vast area of parkland encompasses some 4,757 sq. km. of rugged Shield country. The park's numerous lakes and streams, its rich history and its wild, undeveloped landscape all contribute to its reputation as an area of unparalleled wilderness canoeing opportunity.

The Quetico Provincial Park Master Plan was approved in September, 1977. Its approval provided an expression of how the government intended the park to be planned, developed and managed over a period of time.

The implementation of all aspects of a master plan are generally considered to span a period of some twenty years. During that time, it is inevitable that events and changes will take place which were unforeseen or incorrectly forecasted during the planning process. To ensure that a master plan remains current and relevant, a periodic review is an essential stage in the planning process. Additionally, reviews provide an opportunity for evaluation of progress made to date and for public consultation on any aspect of park management. Traditionally, reviews have been undertaken at five-year intervals following initial master plan approval.

During the summer of 1981, the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Provincial Parks Council initiated the first five-year review of the Quetico Master Plan. To assist in the public consultation aspect of the review procedure, an information package was widely distributed. It outlined the review process, issues felt to be of interest or concern and suggested revisions or additions to policy items as proposed by the Ministry of Natural Resources.

In the fall of 1981, the Provincial Parks Council and Ministry staff travelled to Atikokan, Thunder Bay, Fort Frances and Toronto to meet with members of the public interested in the Quetico Master Plan. An informal "open house" was hosted by the Ministry of Natural Resources to provide additional information to those in attendance and to answer specific questions concerning the park's management. Each "open house" was followed by a public meeting hosted by the Provincial Parks Council. The Council received and recorded written and verbal submissions on any aspect of the Quetico Master Plan and the management of the park. Additionally, interested members of the public were invited to forward comments expressing their views directly to the Chairman of the Provincial Parks Council. The Council received some 1400 submissions from members of the public which addressed some 94 park management issues. On this basis, the Council formulated 14 recommendations relating to the management of the park and forwarded these to the Minister of Natural Resources in December, 1981. Their individual recommendations and the Minister's response were released publicly in January, 1983.

This document integrates the accepted recommendations of the Provincial Parks Council and some of the original revisions proposed by the Ministry into the **Park Policy** section of the Quetico Master Plan (1977). In some instances, no changes to the descriptive or policy items were necessary, thus the text remains unchanged from the original master plan. In other sections, changes were necessary to reflect revised policies or intentions. **This document, as formulated through the review process, replaces the Park Policy section of the master plan and will guide the management of Quetico Provincial Park until the next review.**

Figure 2

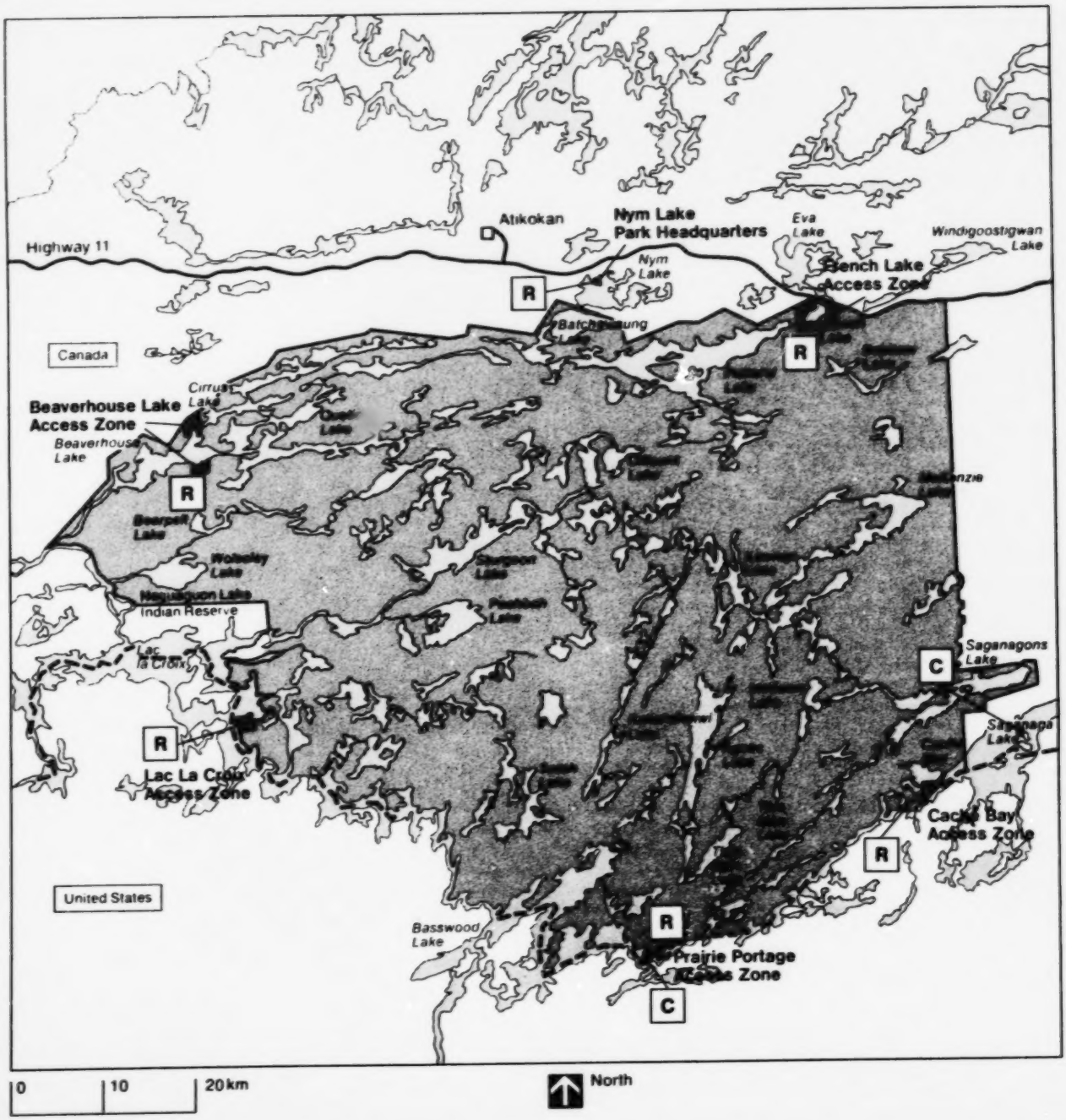
Park Zones

Access Zone

Wilderness Zone

R Ranger Station

C Canada Customs/Immigration



Park Policy

Park Goal

The goal is to preserve Quetico Provincial Park which contains an environment of geological, biological, cultural and recreational significance, in perpetuity for the people of Ontario as an area of wilderness that is not adverseley affected by human activities.

Statement Explaining the Goal

Quetico will be planned, managed and operated as a wilderness park in accordance with the *Ontario Provincial Parks Planning and Management Policies* (1978). This document defines wilderness parks as:

". . . substantial areas where the forces of nature are permitted to function freely and where visitors travel by non-mechanized means and experience expansive solitude, challenge and personal integration with nature."

As a wilderness park, Quetico will be totally resource-oriented. Man is not considered to be incompatible with Quetico's wilderness landscape; however, his presence is acceptable only within an ecological context whereby man's numbers and technology participate rather than dominate.

Although the wilderness concept is intended to allow natural forces to function freely, one significant set of constraints must be recognized. Quetico's management philosophy must not result in the endangerment of values external to the park or of certain specified values within its boundaries. As an example, should a forest fire within the park endanger capital intensive access zone facilities or exterior commercial timber stands, Quetico's management policies must permit suppressive action despite inconsistency with the wilderness ideal. Thus, insect infestations, disease and fire (though all natural components of the park's ecosystem) may not be allowed to run their natural course without management intervention. However, where such intervention in a natural process is undertaken, every effort will be made to minimize the environmental impact of the corresponding management actions.

With regard to user activities, low intensity recreation (essentially wilderness travel and associated activities), outdoor education and scientific research will be permitted. Although compatible with the wilderness concept, some degree of conflict is inevitable between these activities and the preservation component of the park goal. As a result, management action will be required to minimize this potential for conflict and thereby to maintain the integrity of both the biophysical environment and the quality of the user's recreational experience. Although the essential management technique employed to achieve this end will be the limitation of the amount and type of use, unobtrusive management of the biophysical environment will be permitted in instances where use is inevitably concentrated (e.g. campsites, portages, trails). The impact of such management input will be minimal, however, since related action will be undertaken only in response to conflicts precipitated by low intensity recreational activities.

Park Zoning

Two types of zones will be employed to guide management within Quetico — namely a central wilderness zone and peripheral access zones. Historical and nature reserve zones may be designated following subsequent reviews of the master plan to facilitate distinct management practices appropriate to the documented resource values. Areas within the wilderness zone and access zones may be designated by the Superintendent to facilitate approved research projects. Special management prescriptions may be implemented within these areas as required by a particular project provided they are consistent with the policies for a wilderness class park.

A brief comment on a series of buffer zones as identified in the policy statement is included at the close of this section. It is emphasized, however, that these zones lie outside the park boundary and therefore should not be considered to fall within the terms of reference of this document.

Wilderness Zone

The wilderness zone, as shown in Figure 2, occupies all but about 250 ha of Quetico's approximately 475,783 ha. The opportunities available within the wilderness zone comprise the *raison d'être* of the park. It is within this zone that a concerted effort will be made to preserve the revered qualities of Quetico, as identified in the park's goal. Thus, the wilderness zone will remain the domain of the natural process; the presence of the recreationist will be that of a privileged intruder, his activities being restricted to those not compromising the integrity of the biophysical base. Because of its dominance within the park, the wilderness zone is the focus of the detailed policy outline as contained in the following sections.

Access Zones

Traditionally, Quetico has been served by seven entry stations. Cache Bay (Saganaga Lake), Prairie Portage (Basswood Lake), Cabin 16 (Basswood Lake), and Lac la Croix, all accessible by water only, are located on Quetico's southern boundary. Beaverhouse Lake and French Lake, accessible by water and road respectively, as well as the park headquarters at Nym Lake provide northern entry opportunities.

A major emphasis in the planning and management of Quetico is the development and improvement of opportunities for northern access. The implementation of this basic policy will achieve a number of important objectives. Firstly, additional northern entry opportunities will facilitate the use of Quetico by Canadians and, in particular, residents of Ontario. Secondly, in providing viable alternatives to the traditionally heavily used southern entry points, these entry opportunities will encourage user redistribution within the park. Finally, the resulting increase in user activity in areas adjacent to the park's northern boundary will tend to increase the economic impact of Quetico on the surrounding local Atikokan area.

In the future, five access zones (Fig. 2), each with a ranger station, will serve Quetico and will be located strategically about the park's periphery. *French Lake* will maintain its present status as an access zone with acknowledged non-conforming facilities and limitations on further improvements or the introduction of new programs. Conditions for improvements to be undertaken will be limited to those facilities and areas where it is necessary to ensure public safety, environmental protection and to enhance the visitor's experience. *Lac la Croix* and *Cache Bay* access zones will be maintained, as will *Prairie Portage*. In the absence of a Canada Customs and/or Immigration presence or facilities at Prairie Portage, Ministry staff will operate the ranger station for wilderness management purposes only and will not issue permits for interior use. The *Cabin 16* access zone has been closed and the area will ultimately be incorporated into the wilderness zone. The previously (1977) designated access zone on *Beaverhouse Lake* will be revised to include the existing ranger station facilities and a site on the north side of Beaverhouse Lake which presently provides vehicle access and undeveloped parking facilities.

Two external ranger station sites, namely *Nym Lake* and an *undesignated eastern site*, will provide additional access opportunities. Options for selection of an eastern ranger station site will be presented for public review prior to implementation.

The designation or improvement of ranger station access facilities will be contingent upon:

- site selection, and
- visitor use.

The first criterion ensures that the site can physically sustain the required facility development, while the second minimizes the possibility of excessive user concentrations within sectors of the park's interior. It is emphasized that the above-noted objective of increasing opportunities for northern access is achievable only to the extent that these site-specific criteria are not compromised.

As park user and resource studies provide more detailed information, adjustments to the roles of the respective access zones may be undertaken in the future. For example, the development of an access zone adjacent to the eastern boundary may tend to direct use to the same water corridors as the existing entry station at Cache Bay. Subject to the findings of park carrying capacity and user distribution studies, it may be necessary to adjust entries through any of the park's access zones.

Research and Special Areas

Areas may be selected by the park superintendent to accommodate approved research projects. Management policies within these areas will differ from those applicable to the wilderness zone proper to the extent that both user activities and management practices may be more stringently controlled if required to ensure the viability of a given research project. The precise nature of these controls may vary from one research area to another depending on the actual requirements of individual projects. Research areas do not constitute a permanent area designation but will remain in effect only for the duration of the project. However, depending on the requirements of a given project, an area designation could be maintained over a period of several years.

The identification and recording of sensitive features will be continued to provide information for specific management decisions which may be necessary to protect them. The location of these particular features will be plotted on a master map that will be kept at the park administrative headquarters. This inventory of special areas will lend itself to a variety of practical applications. Firstly, such information will serve as an important general data source. Secondly, it will guide the management and operation of the park in order that the possibility of damaging special features will be minimized. Thirdly, where fragility is not a factor, special areas will constitute a focal point for the park visitor services program.

External Buffer Zones

The Minister's policy statement on June 21, 1973 makes provisions for the establishment of three external buffer zones. The administrative districts (M.N.R.) of both Thunder Bay and Atikokan, through their respective Land Use Plans, will give recognition to these zones and more particularly, follow the guidelines for the delineation and management of each buffer zone as set down within the policy statement:

Zone A: A buffer zone of approximately 1.6 km in width will be established beyond the revised park boundary. No additional patented or leased property rights will be granted within this zone.

Zone B: An area of restricted land-use adjacent to Zone A will be controlled by a land-use plan which respects the values of the park.

Zone C: The entire watershed of Quetico Provincial Park will be considered as an area in which water quality standards will be enforced to protect park values.

Park Boundary

The park boundary has been partially realigned to minimize administrative problems, particularly as these related to the enforcement of park regulations. In some areas, a lake shoreline had formed the boundary. Thus, parties camped on the shoreline, not being within the park, had not been subject to the park's regulations. In other areas, the boundary had passed through the central portions of lakes, and thus presented even more difficult administrative problems.

The revised boundary has alleviated these problems by ensuring that peripheral water bodies are either included in or excluded from the park. Corresponding adjustments of a relatively major nature were: the exclusion of Lac la Croix from the park and the inclusion of Batchewaung Lake and Saganagons Lake. In addition, the northern boundary, moved inland from the northern shorelines of the park's peripheral lakes, is formed by a series of straight lines joining points not closer than 180m to major park water bodies. Finally, excepting where affected by adjustments noted above, the southern boundary of the park remains coincident with the Canada-United States boundary. Boundary adjustments were surveyed and cut and an associated legal description developed over a three-year period (1974 to 1976). The new boundary was implemented in 1978. All forms of private land tenure incorporated within the park as a result of the adjustment will, in due course, be acquired by the Crown.

Resource Management

The objective of the resource management program is to ensure that natural processes are allowed to function freely, within the constraints of public safety and the need to protect values both within and outside the park.

In keeping with the wilderness concept of allowing natural forces to function freely, the active management of the park's resource base will be minimized. Management activity will be restricted generally to monitoring and research aimed at the detection of problems in their initial stages and the development of appropriate corrective measures as required. Where possible, potential problems will be avoided through such unobtrusive measures as the regulation of use (e.g. user quotas, fish limits, motor ban).

However, the necessity of actively managing the biophysical base through the suppression of such potentially destructive natural forces as insects, disease and fire will be unavoidable where these forces can be demonstrated to pose a threat to the values identified in the above objective. The need for a second category of active management input, an attempt to approximate natural processes, is more subtly induced. In fact, this need is created by the suppression of natural forces whose absence would tend to cause significant changes in the character of the biophysical base. Thus, the effects of these natural forces, were they not suppressed, must be approximated through resource management if Quetico's wilderness environment is to be maintained. Fire by prescription is being investigated as a major tool that will facilitate the attainment of this end.

In addition, management action will also be required to minimize the impact on the biophysical base of park users engaged in compatible activities. Reflecting the distribution and concentration of users, this management requirement will be restricted generally to campsites and portages, and consequently treated in this document in the context of the development of recreational facilities. In addition, as noted above, policies regulating user activities and numbers will have an indirect effect and are later discussed in the context of user activities and visitor regulations. However, where the impact of user activity is more pervasive (e.g. man-caused fire), then associated policies are considered below.

Individual resource management policies are discussed below under a series of headings, each representing one component of the resource base. It is important to note, however, that these components are not independent, but on the contrary, highly interdependent. Thus, although the respective policies and management planning requirements are listed separately, the integration of all facets of resource management will be a major objective of subsequent management planning exercises.

Air

The maintenance of environmental quality and the protection of park values are fundamental to the management of Quetico. Recent concerns expressed on the

subject of airborne pollutants, acid precipitation and the effects on the land and water base of the park, have been heightened as a result of the Ontario Hydro coal-fired generating station under construction at Marmion Lake, 16 km north of the park's boundary.

The Ministry of Natural Resources has co-operated with the Ontario Ministry of the Environment in the establishment of monitoring programs within Quetico. These involve the collection of water, soil and vegetation samples from pre-designated sites. Ontario Hydro also has studies related to precipitation chemistry, aquatic environments and air quality. Monitoring stations for the collection of air quality data have been located at five sites outside the park. Two of these stations are situated relatively close to the park boundary (Nym Lake and Lac la Croix). Information collected will span both pre-operational and operational phases of the Marmion Lake generating station.

Studies undertaken to date indicate the generating station will not adversely affect the park environment. However, co-operation will continue to be extended to Ontario Hydro and the Ministry of the Environment in their on-going monitoring programs, provided the latter are consistent with the wilderness management objectives for the park. If unacceptable environmental conditions are observed, the Ministry of Natural Resources will make the appropriate representations.

Water

The Ministry of the Environment has established a monitoring program to provide data on the quality of park waters utilizing 33 water sample sites. The purpose of this program is to ensure the early detection of any deterioration in water quality so that corrective measures can be undertaken during the initial stages of an emerging problem. In addition, land-use planning exercises undertaken in areas adjacent to the park will consider the problem of monitoring water quality outside the Quetico boundary but within its watershed. Finally, water quality along the boundary waters, an area of international water flow, is recognized as a potential problem. Here, the quality of Quetico waters may be affected by factors outside the jurisdiction of both the park and the province. Continued co-operation with United States government agencies will be maintained in an attempt to ensure that Quetico's values are not impaired.

Water levels within Quetico will not be controlled by dams located in the park. Existing dams will be removed or allowed to deteriorate. Most are simple, log or earth-filled structures constructed during the Dawson Route or logging eras. Often these structures, by not significantly controlling water levels, no longer fulfill a useful purpose. However, major dams presently control water levels on both Tanner Lake and Pickerel Lake. The log dam on Tanner Lake and the concrete dam on Pickerel Lake will not be mantained, but will be allowed to deteriorate. A gradual lowering of the artificial water level on Pickerel Lake will be accomplished by the removal of all stop logs in the dam. Changes associated with this lowering will be closely monitored by park staff.

At Prairie Portage, a third major dam straddles the Canada-U.S. boundary between the Inlet Bay on Basswood Lake and Sucker Lake. This dam is maintained by American authorities.

A water management plan will be prepared and will emphasize the monitoring and control of water quality.

Land

Prospecting, the staking out of mining claims or the working of mines is prohibited in Quetico Provincial Park. The titles to the mineral and surface rights for all mining claims, patents and licences of occupation located within the park are being acquired by the Crown. This program is ongoing and will continue until all properties have been acquired.

Sand and gravel deposits may be utilized in the limited maintenance required on wilderness campsites and portages. Care will be exercised in the selection of sources of sand and gravel to ensure that significant earth science features are not destroyed. Sites will be discreetly located and contoured upon the completion of individual projects.

A land management plan will be developed to provide guidelines for the maintenance of portages and campsites, the application of appropriate rehabilitation techniques, the removal of abandoned cabins (McKenzie Lake, Kahshahpiwi Lake and Sturgeon Lake) and the acquisition of all tenured land holdings.

Vegetation

As a general principle, the park's vegetation will be allowed to respond to ecological processes without intervention. However, as noted in preceding sections, there are circumstances in which natural forces such as insects, disease and fire must be suppressed. Consequently, if the wilderness ideal is to be attained, it may be necessary to simulate the effect of the natural process through specific management action. As noted above, fire by prescription, emphasizing managed natural fire, is being investigated as a means to this end.

Logging will not be permitted in Quetico. Cutover areas, created by former logging operations, were scarified and, where necessary, planted prior to 1971. No further artificial regeneration will be undertaken in these areas. The Domtar logging camp, formerly located on the north side of the French River, has been removed. The rehabilitation of its site was completed in 1977. All associated timber access roads extending southward into the park were closed to vehicular traffic and allowed to regenerate naturally. To ensure that vehicular access to this road network was effectively prohibited, the associated bridge over the French River was removed.

Fish

Commercial fishing will not be permitted in Quetico. Recreational angling is considered as one component of the total wilderness experience but not as an end in itself. Therefore, users will be encouraged to fish only for food and not to carry fish out of the park. It is also anticipated that the eventual banning of motorboats, although implemented primarily to ensure a quality wilderness canoeing experience, will result in a substantial reduction in angling pressure.

The manipulation of limits and seasons will comprise the major fisheries management tool employed within Quetico. Limits and seasons will be established on a periodic basis to ensure that the quality of the park's fishery resource is maintained. In addition, these regulations may be applied on an individual lake basis and may vary from temporary to permanent restrictions and closures. Consequently, fisheries regulations applied within Quetico need not necessarily comply with those in effect outside its boundary.

The reintroduction of native species may be undertaken if feasible and supported through appropriate documentation. The introduction of non-native species will not be permitted. Furthermore, the removal of species for stocking programs outside the park and the collection of fish spawn will not be permitted unless the latter constitutes some part of an approved research project. Additionally, the possession of bait fish will not be permitted.

The lake survey program has been discontinued. However, three lakes (Agnes, Pickerel and Robinson) have been recently designated (1980) for inclusion in Quetico-Mille Lacs Fisheries Assessment Unit, established under the Strategic Planning for Ontario Fisheries (S.P.O.F.) program. Guidelines to ensure the fisheries assessment activities will have a minimal impact on wilderness visitors will be formulated. Data collected on fish species and their habitat will benefit the provincial fisheries assessment program and will assist in the formulation of a fisheries management plan for the park. The latter will be prepared and will take into

account such factors as the detailed definition of lake survey methods, the monitoring of the park's fishery resource and the criteria for setting limits and seasons.

Wildlife

Direct management of wildlife populations may be undertaken when the condition of wildlife populations within the park poses a threat to public health or safety, (e.g. nuisance bears) or to the health and well-being of animal populations external to the park (e.g. tularemia). The reintroduction of native species may be undertaken if feasible and supported through appropriate documentation. The introduction of non-native species will not be permitted. Furthermore, the removal of species for stocking programs outside the park will not be permitted unless it constitutes some part of an approved research project. It is recognized that wildlife habitat will be affected to the extent that fire is employed as a resource management tool. Otherwise, wildlife populations will not be actively managed.

Hunting will not be allowed in Quetico. Trapping will constitute the only form of resource extraction permitted. Active traplines will be retained but shall be retired if they fall into disuse or if the provisions of the Game and Fish Act and Regulations are not met. The gradual retirement of traplines is aimed at the ultimate exclusion of trapping from the park. As a means of initiating this objective, the transfer of traplines will be discontinued after May 31, 1986 with the exception of those traplines licenced to members of the Lac la Croix Indian Band. Trapline operations will continue to be monitored so that quotas set to ensure that fur-bearing species are not depleted as a result of trapping pressure, are not exceeded. In addition, trappers will be required to provide relevant information to the Ministry as a valuable input to Quetico's wildlife management program.

Aircraft landings will not be permitted except at licenced locations (Revised Regulation of Ontario 822). Furthermore, the following provisions will apply to the use of snowmobiles and outboard motors by trappers while travelling to and from and while tending their traplines:

- Snowmobiles: The use of snowmobiles will be permitted in areas designated by the park superintendent (R.R.O. 822).
- Outboard Motors: The use of outboard motors for the purpose of trapping activities will be permitted through an amendment to Revised Regulation of Ontario 822 in order that trappers and licenced helpers can possess and operate an outboard motor with an engine rating not exceeding 10 h.p. (7.5 kw) during the trapping season.

Existing trapline cabins may be improved and new ones constructed, but there will be a limit of one cabin per trapline; where practical, one cabin will serve two or more traplines. Cabins will be discreetly sited, away from shorelines and off major canoe routes. Portions of traplines that are partially included in the park as a result of boundary adjustments will be treated in the same way as those that are entirely within the park.

A wildlife management plan will be prepared and will include: a description of the park's animal populations (their characteristics, habitat requirements, etc.); mechanisms for the monitoring and control of unhealthy animal pouplations; and consideration of the effects of fire by prescription on animal habitats and their associated populations. Guidelines for the management of trapping activities have been completed and will constitute a segment of the wildlife management plan.

Insects and Diseases

Insects and diseases will be controlled only when important values external to the park are endangered. To this end, the ongoing program of monitoring and detecting areas with insect or disease infestation will continue.

Techniques used to control insects and diseases will be those that cause a minimum degree of unnatural impact on the park environment. For example, biological controls or fire by prescription, if feasible in a given situation, would be considered preferable to the use of chemicals. Chemical controls may be employed only when monitoring programs indicate that a critical situation is developing and that no other technique will suffice. The area treated will be limited to the extent possible. Chemical treatment over water bodies will be prohibited.

Fire

As a prerequisite to the implementation of a fire management program in Quetico, a thorough study of the relationship of fire to the ecology of plant communities in the park was initiated in 1975 and continued through 1976. This study emphasized an inventory of vegetative types, the dates and locations of old burns and the effects of fire on existing plant communities. Data analysis enabled the determination of the ecological role of fire with respect to all species or at least their major communities.

As additional information becomes available to support the use of fire as a park management tool, then a fire management plan will be tailored to suit the needs of the ecosystems within the park. This plan should consider the role of fire by prescription with emphasis on the following:

- managed natural fire;
- the need for hazard reduction;
- the prediction of fire behaviour for defined fire management areas;
- criteria for instantaneous fire management decisions;
- wildfire control and suppression;
- the evacuation of recreationists.

The study initiated in 1975 comprises the first stage of this fire management planning process.

The fire management plan will constitute a major component of the overall resource management plan for Quetico. It will emphasize the interrelationships of the various elements or components of the park's resource base and consequently recognize the need for the integration of the management planning carried out according to various branch responsibilities. Fire management is emphasized as a major component, since fire is the major tool which could be used to approximate a natural forest and thereby natural wildlife habitat conditions.

Until such time as the park's fire management plan has been developed, the existing provincial fire management program will be continued except as modified here. Primary fire detection within the park will be accomplished through the aerial detection program. Additionally, simple lightning detection devices will be utilized and have already been installed as part of the primary weather reporting network established by the Ministry of Natural Resources. These stations are located at Beaverhouse Lake, Prairie Portage and Cache Bay ranger stations. Finally, cooperation between the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and the U.S. Forest Service in fire detection and suppression along the Canada-U.S. border area will be maintained.

Fire crews will be trained in fire fighting techniques which cause a minimal impact on the resources. Heliports, aircraft landings, fire camp facilities and other fire fighting support installations will be located away from major recreational waterways. Heavy equipment will not be used except where its application is essential to maintain public safety or to protect endangered external park values. Chemical fire retardants may be used, but in strict accordance with provincial and supplementary regional policy. Since chemical retardants are incompatible with the wilderness ideal, their use will be minimized.

User Activities

The objective with respect to user activities within Quetico is to provide opportunities for wilderness recreation, outdoor education and scientific research.

In terms of numbers of users, the major component of this objective is wilderness recreation. Those recreational activities considered compatible with the wilderness

orientation of Quetico are identified below. Because of their importance with regard to maintaining a quality user experience, controls on the numbers and activities of users engaged in acceptable activities are discussed in the following section. In addition, the conditions under which scientific research will be permitted are outlined. Although specific mention is not made of outdoor education users, this user group will comply with the policies which apply to wilderness recreationists.

Recreational Use

Recreational activities permitted within Quetico will include primitive travel (e.g. canoeing, hiking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing) as well as those activities that are associated and compatible with primitive travel (e.g. camping, fishing, photography, viewing). The types of primitive travel provided for will only be those that are consistent with the historical context of the park. For example, although horseback riding and sailing may be considered as primitive forms of travel, facilities for these activities will not be provided for within Quetico. In addition, the use of Quetico in the teaching or practising of consumptive or destructive wilderness survival techniques will not be permitted. Similarly, those activities which may permanently deface the park landscape (e.g. use of pitons for rock climbing) will be prohibited.

In keeping with its wilderness ideal, the recreational use of all mechanical forms of transportation will be ultimately prohibited. This ban will include motor powered watercraft, airplanes, snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles. The gradual reduction in the use of motor powered watercraft is aimed at the ultimate exclusion of this form of travel within Quetico. Existing regulations ban motor powered watercraft from all waters within the park with one exception. Watercraft powered by not more than 10 h.p. (7.5 kw) and used by a member of the Lac la Croix Indian Band who is also a member of the Lac la Croix Guides Association, may be operated for the purpose of day-use guiding on Wolseley Lake, Tanner Lake, Minn Lake, McAree Lake, the Maligne River from Lac la Croix to Tanner Lake, Quetico Lake and Beaverhouse Lake. A reduction in the existing number of lakes with a partial motor ban will be implemented on April 1, 1986 with the closure of Quetico Lake and Beaverhouse Lake to all motor powered watercraft.

The practice of utilizing motorized watercraft for towing purposes will be discouraged, with the possibility of enacting regulations to prohibit this use should it continue. Similarly, the use of other motorized equipment (e.g. chain saws, power augers, generators) will not be permitted.

Aircraft landings will be permitted at licenced locations only. Following the improvement of road access to the Beaverhouse Lake access zone from Highway 11, aircraft landings will be terminated at the ranger station. While road improvements are a prerequisite to the implementation of aircraft landing restrictions, the restriction will not be imposed prior to April 1, 1986 at the earliest.

Furthermore, to minimize the impact of overflights on the wilderness user, Ontario will recommend to the federal government, the establishment of a 1,220m. flying ceiling over the park.

Research

Scientific research will be encouraged. However, individual research projects must contribute to the existing knowledge of the park's resource base, have practical application to park management problems or employ the park as a base reference where no viable alternatives exist. Thus, Quetico will not serve as a generalized laboratory for all types of scientific research. Furthermore, regardless of their respective orientations, all research projects must be compatible with the park's goal. Depending on both the value and the requirements of a given project, a research area may be designated.

Research projects, regardless of the proponent and including those undertaken by government staff, will be submitted to the Ministry of Natural Resources Regional Director, North Central Region, for approval and may be undertaken only with the written permission of the Ministry's District Manager, Atikokan District. In addition to permitting the initation of the project, this authorization will specify any conditions upon which approval is contingent. Finally, researchers will be required to report to the District Manager in writing on the findings of each research program. If the duration of a given program is greater than one year, the submission of an interim report will be required within six months of the close of each field season.

A number of restrictions must be applied in order to minimize the impact of the research project on both the resource base and on other users. The removal of biological specimens and archaeological excavations may be permitted, but only by specific authorization. It is emphasized that archaeological research, in addition to complying with The Provincial Parks Act, must also be licenced under The Ontario Heritage Act. All research projects, resulting in the approved alteration of a site (e.g. digging, plant collecting, anchoring of instruments, etc.) must include a rehabilitative component which will restore the site to its original condition as closely as possible. Finally, the construction of permanent structures to facilitate a research project will not be permitted.

Visitor Regulation Program

The objective with respect to the visitor regulation program is to minimize through the control of use levels and user activities, the deterioration of both the park's biophysical environment and the quality of the user's wilderness experience.

The exclusion of non-compatible uses, as discussed in the preceding section, will not in itself ensure that the quality of the wilderness environment is maintained. Ultimately, as recreational use continues to increase, even compatible user activities must be controlled. In recognition of this need, a visitor regulation program has been developed which controls the numbers as well as certain actions of park visitors engaged in activities compatible with the park's wilderness orientation. This visitor regulation program is based upon a defined recreational carrying capacity for the park, which in turn has been derived from the analysis of the capabilities of both the resource base and of existing developed facilities (mostly campsites) to sustain use and of the tolerance of wilderness users to encounters with other user groups. The visitor regulation program has been established to ensure that this capacity is not exceeded. It is emphasized that, as a general principle, every effort will be made to ensure that visitors experience the maximum freedom of choice once entry to the interior has been gained. To this end, the visitor regulation program strives to impose necessary restrictions on park visitors prior to their entry into the interior and, preferably, prior to their arrival at an access zone. Consequently, the primary vehicles of the visitor regulation program will be the daily entry quotas.

Data collection leading to the development of entry quotas was initiated in 1970 when Quetico's shorelines were inventoried and evaluated to determine their capabilities for canoe-camping. In subsequent years, an ongoing program has identified and monitored all existing campsites. Complementing these inventories of existing and potential campsites is a study of the numbers, characteristics and distributions of Quetico canoeists. This study, based on a trip travel report format, was initiated in 1975 and will be continued as required in order to update the data base.

Based upon these two basic sets of information (campsite supply and user distributions related to campsites), a visitor regulation program has been developed. Recognizing the ideal of imposing a minimum of travel restrictions on the park visitor once entry to the interior has been attained, this program seeks to establish a daily entry quota for each ranger station, which ensures that the interior campsite capacities of defined areas are not exceeded. To this end, a

travel prediction model is being employed. Entry quotas together with a visitor reservation system were implemented in 1977.

In addition to entry quotas, other regulations, primarily regarding party size and length of stay will be employed. The regulation limiting wilderness campsite occupancy to one party per site will continue. Also the canoe party size will be revised to a maximum of six in order to minimize deterioration to wilderness campsites. Groups travelling together will limit themselves to a maximum of two parties, so that their impact on park resources and the experience of other wilderness visitors is minimized.

There will be no limit to the maximum length of stay in the park for individual parties. However, limitations may be imposed at campsites situated within heavily congested sectors of the park, particularly in the vicinity of access zones or along important travel corridors. The specific degree of control will be identified within the detailed visitor regulation program.

To maintain the quality of the wilderness environment, a number of additional restrictions are required. The use of non-burnable but disposable food and beverage containers has been prohibited in the interior. All other containers along with metal foils and other refuse, which is not burned, must be carried out of the interior by the park visitor. These restrictions came into effect in 1978 following an information program commenced in 1977. Also, in areas of critical firewood shortage, or during periods of extreme fire hazard, visitors may be required to carry portable stoves. Finally, in order to ensure full control of user activity, the establishment and use of outpost camps will be prohibited.

It may become necessary in the future to establish separate quotas for residents and non-residents to ensure that residents have access opportunity to their resource. The essential concern here is that, as both resident and non-resident demands continue to increase and the park's defined capacity cannot accommodate both, the overwhelming disparity in proportion between residents and non-residents will result in a situation whereby residents might be denied access while non-residents saturate the park. Thus, separate resident and non-resident quotas will be incorporated into the visitor regulation program if required to avoid such an outcome. This ratio will ensure that within the constraints imposed by the defined wilderness recreational carrying capacity, the satisfaction of resident demand is given priority.

Visitor Services

The objective of the visitor services program is to ensure that the park user:

- can develop an appreciation of the intent and meaning of the wilderness concept as set down in the park goal;
- can become acquainted with individual park themes;
- can have access to information of specific interest and can be made aware of the various policies and regulations which have a bearing on their activities within the park.

In addition, major emphasis will be placed on the development of a marketing strategy as a component of the park visitor services plan and program. The latter will be designed to increase the public's awareness of the park's unique values and the alternate recreational opportunities available in Atikokan and surrounding area. Where possible, this strategy will be developed in conjunction with the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation, the Atikokan Tourism Office and other Regional tourist offices.

The visitor services program will emphasize two major themes, each containing one or more sub-themes. The wilderness concept is naturally of paramount importance. This theme will explore the philosophy of wilderness and thus attempt to foster among users an appreciation and understanding of the dynamics of ecological processes. The second major theme is a cultural one. It will delve into the history of Quetico from the earliest times to the present, including the aboriginal cultures, the fur trade, the Dawson Route and the more recent logging eras.

An important practical aspect of the visitor services program will be to promote among park users an acceptance of park management policies. This objective will be achieved by informing the park user of the intent and need for particular park management policies. Here the underlying assumption is that park users who are aware of the reasoning behind a given policy will be more likely to accept its need and to comply with it. This approach is appropriate in a park such as Quetico where user control and enforcement activities are extremely difficult.

Quetico's vast size and wilderness orientation make the challenge of program design and administration particularly great. Within the wilderness zone (the destination of the typical park visitor), users are widely dispersed and on-site facilities incompatible. Even within access zones, and at ranger station facilities, through which all visitors must pass and consequently where visitors are somewhat concentrated, the wilderness orientation of the park precludes the use of certain highly technical interpretive devices. In response to these limitations, the visitor services program will be focused at ranger stations and will stress personal communication.

Visitor services facility development will not occur within the wilderness zone. Information will be provided to interior users at ranger stations prior to their entering the wilderness zone as well as through occasional contact with park rangers encountered while in the interior.

Ranger stations will therefore perform the major role in the dissemination of visitor services information. Information will be distributed primarily in the form of publications and through personal contact with visitor services and park staff.

A centralized visitor services centre will be developed at the French Lake Access Zone. This facility will provide workshop and storage facilities for visitor services staff, a research area and archives for the use of authorized park researchers, an indoor amphitheatre and various educational displays for school groups and the travelling public. Interpretive programs presented at this facility will emphasize cultural themes as well as wilderness-oriented sub-themes which may not be easily interpreted in the wilderness environment.

A draft visitor services program plan has been completed which elaborates on the previously stated objectives and the means of implementation. The plan will be finalized prior to the next review of the master plan. In addition, a marketing strategy will be developed outlining the means of distributing information on Quetico to the public at large and will be incorporated into the visitor services program plan.

Recreational Facility Development

The objective of recreational facility development is to prevent deterioration of Quetico's physical environment as a result of user concentrations and, in so doing, to ensure the provision of a quality user experience.

In keeping with the wilderness concept, the development of recreational facilities will be strictly limited within Quetico's interior. Facilities will be sufficient only to permit compatible wilderness activities and to minimize the environmental impact of associated user concentrations. Consequently, the provision of recreational facilities in the interior will be restricted primarily to campsites, portages and trails. It is largely in response to this substantial limitation of facility development, dictated by the wilderness orientation of Quetico, that the master plan emphasizes the control of the number and activities of users as the principle tool to maintain both the integrity of the resource base and the quality of the user's experience.

In addition this section also outlines the facility requirements of access zones. As emphasized previously, the purpose of access zones is to facilitate visitor entry to the park, not to provide a recreational experience as such. Consequently, facilities within access zones will reflect this basic orientation.

Canoe Routes
Development of canoe routes will be undertaken only to the extent that facilities associated with primitive canoe travel, namely campsites and portages, will be provided.

Campsites
The ongoing inventory and evaluation of existing and potential campsites will be continued to derive a figure for the total campsite potential of Quetico. This estimate of total campsite potential will not be based solely on physical criteria but also the tolerance of users to contact with other user groups. Thus, an additional component of this carrying capacity project is the development of a campsite spacing standard. This standard will be a flexible one and will be based on the assumption that sight and sound contact between adjacent campsites is undesirable. Furthermore, criteria for campsite location will avoid development adjacent to portages, fragile features or features of special interest which are specifically identified in visitor services literature. In order to satisfy this requirement, some existing campsites may have to be closed.

Ultimately, all campsites will be designated. Initially, their designation will be accomplished in visitor services literature and at individual sites in areas of relatively high user concentrations (e.g. in areas adjacent to access zones or along travel corridors). On-site designation will be accomplished primarily through the provision of primitive stone fireplaces. In addition, primitive latrines may be provided at campsites as required to prevent the aesthetic and sanitary deterioration of the campsite area. Docking facilities will not be provided. With regard to campsite maintenance, surface treatment and the discreet transplanting of local native tree species for site stabilization or rehabilitation may be permitted.

Campsite spacing standards and maintenance guidelines will be developed and incorporated into the land management plan.

Portages
Portages will consist of primitive pathways developed to provide stable and safe passage betwen segments of canoeable waterways. As a general principle, neither docks nor signs will be permitted at portage landings; however, in exceptional situations involving extreme hazard, signs may be employed. Otherwise, appropriate information on the location of and safe approach to portages will be provided in the park's visitor services literature.

The condition of portages will be continually monitored as a prerequisite to an ongoing maintenance program. Acceptable portage maintenance will include administrative cutting, the construction of log causeways and selective surface treatment. Mechanical portage facilities will not be developed, nor will mechancal devices introduced by users (e.g. portage wheels) be permitted.

Portage maintenance guidelines will be developed and included in the land management plan.

Trails
Back-country hiking opportunities will be developed in response to user demands and within the constraints imposed by the resource base. Criteria for the selection of trail routes may include:
- opportunities for wildlife viewing;
- avoidance of contact and possible conflict with canoeist groups;
- access to features of interpretive or aesthetic value;
- avoidance of areas where site fragility is an overriding consideration;
- utilization of old roadway corridors.

Trails will consist of a primitive, single file path designed to provide the user with an interesting and varied hiking experience. The condition of the trails and their degree of use will be continually monitored in order that timely decisions can be made with regard to facility maintenance and user control. Appropriate trail development and maintenance will include such procedures as administrative cutting and the construction of log causeways. Primitive bridge construction may be permitted, but only in exceptional circumstances. Management of trail-related campsites will be guided by the same principles as those governing the management of waterway-related campsites.

Facilities at Access Zones
Facilities provided at access zones, although similar, will vary mainly in response to mode of access. Where access is gained primarily by water, appropriate facilities will include the following: a ranger station, a visitor services facility, a canoe-launching facility, public sanitary facilities, staff quarters and warehouse facilities. Where access is by road, additional facilities may include a parking lot and campsites. Outfitting services will not be provided at the access zone.

The number of parking spaces and campsites, where provided, will be dependent on the capacity of the site and the entry quota established for a specific access zone. The duration of stay at an access zone campsite will be limited to one night only. These campsites may be used when a party is unable to enter the park as a result of the quota system or inclement weather conditions, or when the party arrives at the zone too late in the day to be reasonably expected to embark on either the interior trip or the homeward journey.

Location, design and materials used for the construction of buildings will be consistent with the wilderness orientation of the park. In addition, site design standards will be applied to road design, construction and maintenance in order to provide an aesthetic access to Quetico. Utilities such as electric power, telephone or gas may be provided at access zones depending on their feasibility in a given situation and only when essential for service.

French Lake Access Zone
French Lake has traditionally provided opportunities for car-camping and day-use activities. Although associated facilities are incompatible with the park goal and classification as a wilderness park *(Ontario Provincial Parks Planning and Management Policies, (1978))*, they will be maintained as recognized non-conforming uses. Where necessary, improvements will be undertaken to ensure public safety, environmental protection and to enhance the visitor's experience.

In other respects, development permitted within this zone will be similar to that of the park's other road access zones.

Park Management and Operation

As a guiding principle, every effort will be made to ensure a high standard of park management activity by promoting an understanding of the park's goal and the concept of wilderness to all levels of staff. To this end, individuals with daily operational responsibilities in the interior will be assigned to a sector of the park and, with their staff, will live and work there throughout the operating season. In addition, all other staff with some level of responsibility for park management will be required to spend a period of time within the park's interior each season.

The daily activities of the management staff will be compatible with those of park users to the fullest extent possible. For example, park staff will generally be required to use canoes for such ongoing tasks as interior maintenance and enforcement. Where exceptions are made, it must be possible to prove that the success of the

particular task is largely contingent upon the use of a given form of mechanical transport.

Administration
The park superintendent is responsible for the entire management and operation of the park except in areas where district-wide programs are relied upon (e.g. fire detection and suppression). Quetico Park staff will include the superintendent, assistant superintendent, park clerk, archaeologist, naturalist, and park rangers. The organization is flexible and can be adjusted as required.

The park's administrative headquarters will remain at Nym Lake. The headquarters will be expanded as required. To facilitate the management of the park and peripheral access zones and ranger stations, Quetico will be divided into management areas. Boundaries may be flexibile and defined on the basis of workload. Each of the management areas will be supervised by a park ranger. Within each of the respective areas, the park ranger's responsibilities will include: supervision of the ranger station operations, visitor services, wilderness management and law enforcement. Throughout the operating season, the park ranger and staff will be based at a ranger station within their particular management area.

Management Planning
Guided by the policies of this master plan review, individual management plans will subsequently be developed in order to give more specific direction to the park's operational program. These management plans will include the following major considerations: water, fish, vegetation, wildlife, fire, insects and disease, visitor services, visitor regulation, cultural-historical resources, research, and land management. The integration of these components will be of overriding concern thoughout the management planning process. Consequently, individual management plans may combine components wherever suitable. However, it is recognized that the schedule and organization of management planning must be flexible and capable of responding to a wide range of considerations (e.g. the complexity of the problem, the availability of data, staffing and funding). Such considerations will combine to dictate the final management planning strategy. It should be stressed, however, that regardless of the form of this final strategy, the integration of individual efforts must be achieved. All management plans will be prepared by the District, approved by the Region and reviewed by Head Office.

Operational Planning
Annual operating plans will be prepared for each aspect of park operations, such as interior management areas, visitor services programs and the French Lake Access Zone. These plans will facilitate the implementation of this master plan and successive management plans through a detailed work program complete with targets and schedules.

Plan Review
The Quetico Provincial Park Master Plan must be sensitive to change and must be kept current and relevant. The review process provides a mechanism for modifying management policies as may be necessary. At the present time, the five year interval between reviews of the master plan is appropriate, particularly when such matters as the location of an eastern ranger station site remains undecided. Following resolution of these types of matters, the interval between reviews and the process followed may be modified.

The annual operating plans designed to enable the orderly implementation of park policies, will be reviewed and updated every year.